Ministry of
Social Development and Social Innovation

2016/17 – 2018/19
SERVICE PLAN

February 2016

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

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Minister
Accountability Statement

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation 2016/17 - 2018/19 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

Honourable Michelle Stilwell
Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation
February 16, 2016

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation focuses on providing British Columbians in need with a system of supports to help them achieve their social and economic independence and secure a better tomorrow as envisioned in the BC Strategic Plan. In pursuit of this, the ministry's key responsibilities include:

- Providing income and disability assistance to those in need;
- Delivering employment programs and services to unemployed and underemployed individuals;
- Supporting community living services that help adults with developmental disabilities and their families develop connections and inclusion with their community; and
- Supporting social innovation and social entrepreneurship to improve social outcomes for all British Columbians.

The Minister is responsible for Community Living BC (CLBC) and is also responsible for leading the implementation of Accessibility 2024, the government's 10-year action plan to make B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities. The ministry is guided by three key pieces of legislation: the *Employment and Assistance Act,* the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and the *Community Living Authority Act*. The ministry is also guided by its long-term vision and goals. Further details about the vision and goals of the ministry can be found here.

Strategic Direction and Context

Strategic Direction

The ministry is undertaking several initiatives to support the government's priorities and to achieve the targets set out in the Minister's Mandate Letter. This work includes ensuring the ministry's continuous support of a balanced provincial budget through prudent fiscal and performance management, which is consistent with the Taxpayer Accountability Principles.

The ministry is committed to lead in the implementation of the Accessibility 2024 Action Plan and continues to support the BC Jobs Plan and the Skills for Jobs Blueprint through an effective employment program. The ministry is implementing the Single Parent Employment Initiative and policy changes for families with children on income assistance to support BC Strategic Plan's vision for a secure tomorrow. In addition, the ministry continues to enhance client service and lead government's efforts to support and encourage social innovation across the province.

Strategic Context

Ministry programs and services are designed to help citizens build a solid connection with communities and the labour market to secure their future and in support of governments view that people who are able to work want to be self-sufficient, support their families and contribute to their communities. By providing temporary help to those who can work, and longer-term aid to those who, through disability or other barriers, have a more difficult time working or who cannot work, the ministry is ensuring the needs of British Columbians are being respected. A good paying, stable and secure job is one of the most important contributions to a healthy, happy and strong family.

The BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) caseload is divided into two groups: temporary assistance for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and disability assistance for individuals who have a disability designation. Both caseloads are impacted by the economy and changing demographics. Improvements in the province's economy have resulted in a continued decline in the temporary assistance caseload. However, demographic shifts resulting from longer life expectancies and an aging population have resulted in continued growth in the disability assistance caseload.

Today's social and service challenges are critical to the ministry's work. These challenges cannot be solved by a single organization. Building and maintaining good relationships and partnerships with other levels of government, businesses, communities, advocates and service organizations help provide responsive programs and support innovative service delivery solutions. The ministry and CLBC continue to work on several initiatives aimed at building long-term sustainability for the social sector that will increase community inclusion, accessibility and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Throughout B.C. there is a growing awareness and commitment to building communities that are welcoming to all. The ministry is the lead for Accessibility 2024, a 10-year action plan to make B.C. the most accessible province in Canada for people living with disabilities. The plan is designed around 12 building blocks - ranging from employment to accessible service delivery - which reflect themes that emerged from public consultation. Accessibility 2024 includes cross-government commitments and partnerships with business and the disability communities that will help improve accessibility in B.C. for people with disabilities.

The ministry is committed to providing quality service that is consistent and responsive no matter where or how it is delivered. The public may access ministry services through traditional channels such as by phone, face-to-face, email, online and fax, and more recently by providing additional self-serve options. The diverse geography of the province and the needs of the people served have guided how the ministry develops its service delivery strategy. The ministry regularly engages with clients through public consultations to shape ongoing improvements to services; these discussions support the ministry's development and integration of both new and traditional modes of service delivery.

Demographic

British Columbia's population aged 19 to 64 is expected to increase by 93,700 (3.2 percent) by 2019.[1] At the same time, the population is getting older. Over the same period, the population aged 19 to 24 is

[1] Population Projections, BC Stats.

projected to decline by 6 percent while the population between the ages of 55 to 64 is projected to increase by 7 percent. A rise in the population increases the pool of potential BCEA clients. In addition, people are more likely to develop a disability as they age increasing the incidence of persons with disabilities.

Economic

The Economic Forecast Council expects British Columbia's real GDP to grow by 2.7 percent in 2016 and 2.6 percent in 2017. Downside risks to BC's economic outlook include the potential for a slowdown in North American economic activity, ongoing fragility in Europe, and slower than anticipated Asian demand, particularly in China. Additional risks include uncertainty in the outlook for the Canadian dollar and weak inflation.

The income assistance caseload is sensitive to the state of the labour market. The economic conditions in other provinces, most notably Alberta, also impact the income assistance caseload as unemployed people move to B.C.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The ministry continues to examine and strengthen its performance management framework to align with government's direction. In addition, the ministry continues to report on a number of performance measures contained in previous Service Plans through DataBC. These measures include: the percent of reconsideration decisions made within legislated time frames; the percent of employment program clients who receive case management services; and the percent of applications for a Person with a Disability designation that are completed within ministry timelines.

Goal 1: Eligible British Columbians in need have access to income assistance and supports in a timely manner.

Objective 1.1: Basic income assistance is available to British Columbians to assist with shelter and support costs.

Strategies

- Provide clients with timely supports for which they are eligible.
- Assist clients to access other potential income sources to improve their independence and self-reliance, including federal Employment Insurance benefits and Canada Pension Plan early retirement and disability benefits.

- Ensure administrative fairness through the provision of an effective and efficient reconsideration and appeal system.

Objective 1.2: Supplementary supports are available to meet the changing and individual needs of British Columbians.

Strategies

- Provide eligible clients with supplemental assistance such as subsidized bus passes, dental and optical assistance.
- Provide eligible low income seniors with the Senior's Supplement.
- Provide children from eligible low and moderate income families with dental and optical assistance through the Healthy Kids Program.

Performance Measure 1: Percentage of ministry decisions confimed on appeal

Performance Measure	Baseline	2015/16 Forecast	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target	2018/19 Target
Percentage of decisions confirmed on appeal	90%*	90%	90%	90%	90%

Data Source: *Average of percentages reported in the Employment and Appeals Tribunal Annual Reports 2011/12-2014/15

Discussion

The ministry endeavors to ensure decisions are made accurately, carefully monitoring the outcome of the tribunal reviews. The percentage of appeal decisions that confirm ministry decisions is an indicator of how well the ministry is performing in its decision-making.

Performance Measure 2: Clients who choose to utilize My Self-Serve

Performance Measure	2014/15 Baseline	2015/16 Forecast	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target	2018/19 Target
Clients Choosing My Self-Serve	9,500	21,000	28,000	35,000	40,000

Data Source: Service Delivery Division, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Discussion

The ministry's online portal My Self-Serve (MYSS), which was implemented provincially in the fall of 2014, provides an online service delivery channel for ministry clients. The online portal modernizes ministry services by offering more flexibility in how, when and where clients access service and by increasing convenience, self-sufficiency, and independence. Clients can choose to use MYSS to access their file information 24/7, submit their monthly report, upload documents from a mobile phone or computer, communicate with ministry employees and print confirmation of assistance. The ministry is leveraging and integrating technology into its service delivery model, leading the way for government to provide modern, convenient, reliable and secure services.

Goal 2: Eligible British Columbians in need have access to services that support increased independence and sustainable employment.

Objective 2.1: The resilience of families in B.C. is enhanced so they can achieve increasingly positive economic outcomes and greater well-being.

Strategies

- Support people to work by ensuring ministry programs and initiatives reduce unnecessary dependency on income assistance.
- Work with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to identify opportunities that will provide single parents with enhanced services and supports that secure employment and independence.
- Consider individual client needs in delivering employment programs and services.

Performance Measure 3: Employment-obligated clients as a percentage of the population aged 19-64

Performance Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Forecast	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target	2018/19 Target
Employment –obligated clients as a percentage of the population aged 19-64	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

Data Source: Research Branch, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Discussion

Clients who are employable are considered "employment-obligated" and must participate in employment-related activities for the purpose of achieving financial independence. The ministry has revised this measure to include employment-obligated clients who may have a medical condition that would require an extended period of time for them to find employment. The measure tracks the percent of British Columbian's working age population between the ages of 19 and 64 who are receiving Temporary Assistance with employment-related obligations. The employable caseload is sensitive to the state of the labour market, so any weakness in the labour market in 2016 and 2017 from a potential slow down in the economy would put pressure on the caseload. Additionally, a prolonged downturn in the Alberta economy could result in more people moving to B.C., which would put further pressure on the income assistance caseload.

Performance Measure 4: Median length of time clients who have employment obligations receive Income Assistance (in months)

Performance Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Forecast	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target	2018/19 Target
Median length of time clients with employment obligations receive assistance	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5

Data Source: Research Branch, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Discussion

The ministry closely monitors the length of time clients receive assistance. Median durations measure the number of months it takes for half a cohort of new employment-obligated clients to stop receiving assistance. High durations signify new employment-obligated individuals are having difficulty becoming independent and are at greater risk of becoming a long-term client. Durations on assistance can rise if economic opportunities are limited or because new clients have more barriers to employment.

Objective 2.2: Ensure effectiveness of the Employment Program of BC

Strategies

- Reduce barriers and provide employment service and supports to all clients including Persons with Disabilities, immigrants, Aboriginal people and other specialized populations, so they move towards independence and self-reliance.
- Work collaboratively with partner ministries through the Labour Market Priorities Board to ensure ministry employment programs and supports are aligned with the priorities of the BC Jobs Plan and the Skills for Jobs Blueprint.

- Create opportunities for partnerships and innovation at the community and employer level.

Performance Measure 5: Percentage of Employment Program of BC clients obtaining employment

Performance Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Forecast	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target	2018/19 Target
Percentage of Employment Program of BC case-managed clients who achieve employment	49.7%	50%	51%	52%	53%

Data Source: Employment and Labour Market Services Division, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Discussion

This performance measure reflects the percentage of case-managed Employment Program of BC clients who achieved employment. As the ministry continues to place emphasis on employment results for clients, the outcome rate increased in 2015/16 and new targets have been established for subsequent years.

Goal 3: Support British Columbians in need who have disabilities by providing an effective system of support to gain and maintain meaningful independence and inclusion in their communities.

Objective 3.1: Support a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for Persons with Disabilities.

Strategies

- Provide adults with disabilities access to responsive services to support them in participating as full citizens and in achieving improved outcomes consistent with the goals outlined in Accessibility 2024.

- Work collaboratively with other ministries and local, regional and provincial partners to continue the integration and alignment of innovative and inclusive disability supports and services to improve outcomes for Persons with Disabilities and their families.

- Monitor and support the transition process for special needs youth who are entering adulthood to ensure they access the ministry's disability assistance program and the adult community living services offered through Community Living BC.

Objective 3.2: Engage British Columbians across sectors to enhance employment and community inclusion for people with disabilities.

Strategies

- Continue to work with business, community organizations, citizens with disabilities and their families to implement Accessibility 2024.
- Support the Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility, the Presidents Group and the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Action Group to develop solutions and strategies that improve the lives of British Columbians with disabilities and their families.
- Engage stakeholders and the public to identify barriers and solutions to improving employment outcomes for Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Measure 6: Total amount of exempted earnings received by Persons with Disability cases

Performance Measure	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Forecast	2018/19 Target	2019/20 Target	2020/21 Target
Total amount of exempted earnings received by Persons with Disabilities cases	$30 million	$30 million	$32 million	$34 million	$36 million

Data Source: Research Branch, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Discussion

The Employment Program of British Columbia provides a range of specialized services to help individuals with disabilities participate in their communities, pursue employment goals as they are able, increase their self-reliance, and, build skills and experience that may lead to further employment. The ministry also provides other support for Persons with Disabilities to work, including earnings exemptions.

In January 2015, the ministry replaced monthly earnings exemptions with the Annual Earnings Exemption (AEE) for all ministry clients receiving disability assistance. The AEE is a more flexible way of calculating earnings exemptions that helps individuals receiving disability assistance who are able to work to take advantage of employment opportunities and to keep more of their earnings. Total earnings increased because of the AEE and are expected to increase modestly over time.

Goal 4: Promote a culture of social innovation in British Columbia.

Objective 4.1: Support British Columbia's capacity for social innovation.

Strategies

- Develop and maintain strong, productive and sustainable relationships with partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors (including the BC Partners for Social Impact) to support the growth and sustainability of British Columbia's social innovation and social enterprise sectors.
- Support British Columbian social innovators and social entrepreneurs in the identification, implementation and enhancing innovative, community-based solutions.
- Facilitate, develop and implement social finance tools to create new opportunities for innovation.

Discussion

The ministry is committed to supporting and encouraging social innovation and social entrepreneurship in British Columbia.

Resource Summary

Core Business Area	2015/16 Restated Estimates[1]	2016/17 Estimates	2017/18 Plan	2018/19 Plan
Operating Expenses ($000)				
Income Assistance	1,713,937	1,815,138	1,885,910	1,892,823
Employment	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Community Living Services	836,859	881,818	901,826	932,550
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,756	1,796	1,800	1,800
Executive and Support Services	10,435	10,487	10,515	10,573
Total	**2,592,987**	**2,739,239**	**2,830,051**	**2,867,746**

Core Business Area	2015/16 Estimates	2016/17 Estimates	2017/18 Plan	2018/19 Plan
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) ($000)				
Executive and Support Services	2,938	4,034	3,838	1,670
Total	**2,938**	**4,034**	**3,838**	**1,670**

[1] For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2015/16 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2016/17 Estimates.

*Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates."

Appendices

Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information

Employment and Income Assistance

The ministry has 50 Employment and Income Assistance offices and 33 partnerships with Service BC locations throughout British Columbia. To find the office that provides services for a specific community, go to http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/contacts/offices.html, or contact the ministry toll free by telephone from anywhere in the province at 1 866 866-0800.

Service BC refers members of the public to the appropriate ministry office and transfers calls and forwards e-mails free of charge. Hours of operation for Service BC are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

- In Victoria, call: 250 387-6121
- In the Lower Mainland, call: 604 660-2421
- Elsewhere in British Columbia call: 1 800 663-7867
- Outside British Columbia call: 1 604 660-2421
- E-mail address:ServiceBC@gov.bc.ca
- Telephone device for the deaf and hearing impaired (TDD):
    - In the Lower Mainland, call: 604 775-0303
    - Elsewhere in British Columbia, call: 1 800 661-8773

Employment and Labour Market Services

The Employment Program of BC makes it easier for people to find work through a wide range of integrated employment services and supports. For more information on services and supports provided for a specific community, go to: WorkBC Official Website - WorkBC Employment Services Centre